

Report on  
U.S.-Russia Relations



International Security Advisory Board

December 9, 2014

## **Disclaimer**

This is a report of the International Security Advisory Board (ISAB), a Federal Advisory Committee established to provide the Department of State with a continuing source of independent insight, advice and innovation on scientific, military, diplomatic, political, and public diplomacy aspects of arms control, disarmament, international security, and nonproliferation. The views expressed herein do not represent official positions or policies of the Department of State or any other entity of the United States Government.

While all ISAB members have approved this report and its recommendations, and agree they merit consideration by policy-makers, some members may not subscribe to the particular wording on every point.



**United States Department of State**

*Washington, D.C. 20520*

December 9, 2014

**MEMORANDUM FOR UNDER SECRETARY GOTTEMOELLER**

**SUBJECT: Final Report of the International Security Advisory Board (ISAB) on U.S.-Russia Relations**

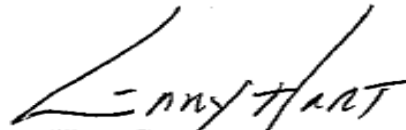
I am forwarding herewith the ISAB's report on U.S.-Russia Relations. The report responds to your request of September 17, 2013, that the Board undertake a study that reviews current and future U.S. – Russian relations, especially with a view toward finding opportunities to improve strategic stability and U.S. national security. The report was drafted by members of a Study Group chaired by Ambassador Linton F. Brooks. It was reviewed by all ISAB members and unanimously approved.

The report is intended to lay out some near and long-term options for U.S. policy, and evaluate opportunities, when it is deemed appropriate, for potential future engagement that might build a stronger relationship and thus contribute to strategic stability in the broadest sense. We interpreted our task as placing special emphasis on steps that could be taken during the remainder of the Obama Administration.

The crisis in Ukraine and the Russian annexation of Crimea occurred as we were gathering data and examining options for what was as a relatively routine re-examination. Now, instead of finding new short-term ways to improve a relationship of partnership, the United States must focus for an indeterminate time on managing a relationship that could become increasingly confrontational.

The report offers a number of recommendations, both explicit and implied, which respond to current Russian actions, identify long-term implications for strategic stability, and address resuming and expanding engagement with the Russian Federation when it becomes appropriate to do so.

We encourage you to consider all of the report's recommendations carefully. The Board stands ready to brief you and other members of the Administration on the report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary Hart". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G" and a long, sweeping underline.

Hon. Gary Hart

Chairman

International Security Advisory Board

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ADVISORY BOARD

Report on  
U.S.-Russia Relations

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# Report on

## U.S.-Russia Relations

In September 2013, the Under Secretary of State for International Security and Arms Control asked the International Security Advisory Board to review current and future U.S. – Russian relations, especially with a view toward finding opportunities to improve strategic stability and U.S. national security. With progress on arms control stalled, the Board was to seek other opportunities for engagement that might build a stronger relationship and thus contribute to strategic stability in the broadest sense.<sup>1</sup> We interpreted our task as placing special emphasis on steps that could be taken during the remainder of the Obama Administration.

The crisis in Ukraine and the Russian annexation of Crimea occurred as we were gathering data and examining options for what we viewed as a relatively routine re-examination. These events had a major influence on the U.S. government view of Russia. The Ukrainian crisis is the most important event in Russo-American relations since the end of the Cold War and dramatically alters America's relationship with Russia and thus the nature of our analysis.

While the immediate sources of the current crisis were Russia-Ukraine disputes and issues internal to Ukraine, the crisis has serious implications for strategic stability in Europe. Russian actions were, in part, a reaction to the fear that growing Ukrainian engagement with Western Europe could ultimately culminate in Ukraine joining NATO. The strength of the Russian reaction brought home what should have already been given more weight by both analysts and policy makers: a substantial Russian security concern with NATO and the United

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<sup>1</sup> We use the term “strategic stability” frequently in this report. By strategic stability we mean a state in which war of any kind between major powers is unlikely and rule-based behavior is the norm. It is important to note that this is a broader use of the term than its Cold War roots in nuclear strategy. Our usage is adapted from that of Thomas Fingar. For other approaches to the concept of strategic stability, see Elbridge A. Colby and Michael S. Gerson (eds.), *Strategic Stability: Contending Interpretations*, U.S. Army War College, February 2013.

States. Thus, instead of finding new short-term ways to improve a relationship of partnership, the United States must now focus for an indeterminate time on managing a relationship that threatens to become increasingly adversarial<sup>2</sup> and confrontational.<sup>3</sup>

The anti-Western/anti-American element in Russia's policy and behavior may grow if Russia increasingly defines its role in the world as that of a counterpoint to U.S. policy and actions on the global stage. The United States and our NATO Allies must take steps to temper tendencies in Moscow that are reminiscent of the Cold War. The challenge for the United States, and thus the challenge for this analysis, is to find a path to protect our allies and friends and to modify Russian behavior and attitudes without appearing to condone Russia's assault on strategic stability in Ukraine, which continues as of this writing. We must do all this from a position of unquestioned, sustained resolve, an elusive objective in democratic societies, including our own.

### **The Enduring Importance of Russia**

The recent necessity for U.S. foreign policy to focus on wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, on countering the so-called Islamic State and on managing the growth of China's power must not obscure the fundamental fact that Russia still matters. As a Permanent Member of the United Nations Security Council its willingness to work with the United States could help promote the maintenance of international order and stability. It is and will remain a powerful influence – for good or for ill – in virtually all international issues as the only country whose interests impinge on all three major areas of U.S. international engagement—Europe, the Middle East and the Asia-Pacific. It has by far the largest nuclear arsenal of any potential

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<sup>2</sup> In describing the relationship as “adversarial,” we do not mean that it is wholly and permanently one of unremitting hostility like the early Cold War, but that it has very strong elements of conflicting interests and direct actions by Russia that, if successful, injure our interests and need an effective response.

<sup>3</sup> We recognize that the fluidity of the current situation, the number of players and various unknown factors makes sound analysis difficult. All declarative sentences in this report should be read as though they were preceded with caveats like “probably...,” “It is likely that...,” “In our estimation...” or similar phrases.



adversary and could destroy the United States as a functioning society in an afternoon. The U.S. – Russian relationship remains one of the most important factors as the United States seeks to create a peaceful and stable world.

Not only is Russia important to overall global security, it shares a number of specific security interests with the United States. Both have an interest in strategic stability (although our interpretations of what the term means differ), in avoiding an arms race, in dealing with proliferation involving North Korea and Iran, in integrating Russia more fully into the global economy, in dealing with the rise of an increasingly assertive China and in resisting Islamic fundamentalism, where Russian importance may increase as the U.S. involvement in Afghanistan winds down. The two countries have worked together on countering nuclear and other terrorism and have cooperated well in areas such as civil space exploration and the Arctic.

At the same time, the U.S. and Russian concepts of security diverge in at least four ways.

- First, while many Russians are privately concerned with the rise of Chinese power and the potential long-term military threat that rise poses,<sup>4</sup> the government has, thus far, chosen to emphasize cooperation with China and, therefore, unlike the United States, not to react to increasingly aggressive actions by the Chinese, especially in the maritime domain. This approach is made easier by the fact that Russia has no allies that are intimidated by Chinese assertiveness. More recently, it also appears to be part of a campaign to use a closer relationship with China as a counterweight to the United States.
- Second, Russian strategic culture includes the belief that Russian security, prestige, and honor depend on imposing strict bounds on the sovereignty and policies of its near neighbors. This came to be called the Brezhnev Doctrine in the Cold War, but elements of it exist today, most prominently with

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<sup>4</sup> As many Russians admit privately, this is one reason (although not the only one) for Russian lack of interest in arms control agreements for non-strategic nuclear weapons.

regard to Ukraine and Georgia but extending to several other regional states. It lingers, for example, in President Putin's reference to a sacred duty to protect Russian speakers wherever they reside. If NATO disbanded tomorrow and the United States embraced isolationism, Russia would still seek near-hegemonic influence over its "near abroad."

- Third, the two countries differ in their approach to countering proliferation, especially with respect to Iran. Although Russia opposes Iran obtaining nuclear weapons and has folded non-proliferation considerations into its dealings with Iran (e.g. cancelling sale of the S-300 air defense system, taking back spent fuel from the Bushehr reactor, and constructive behavior in ongoing nuclear talks with Iran) it has been far less eager than the United States to apply economic sanctions or other forms of pressure to reverse Iranian violations of its non-proliferation obligations. This may reflect commercial considerations, Russia's desire for influence in the Middle East, its generally good relations with Iran or its assessment that Iran is farther away from a deliverable weapon than many in the United States believe.<sup>5</sup>
- The final and most important area where Russian and American security interests differ is in the assessment the two countries have of one another. While acknowledging Russia's nuclear potential, until the Ukrainian crisis, almost no one in the U.S. national security community viewed Russia as a significant military threat. In contrast, many Russians increasingly see U.S. military and diplomatic actions as aimed at them. They believe U.S. ballistic missile defense in Europe is designed to degrade Russian strategic retaliatory potential, that U.S. precision strike capabilities are designed to allow a non-nuclear first strike on Russia, and, most recently, that the so-called "color revolutions" that brought democracy to Ukraine and Georgia were U.S. inspired destabilizations.<sup>6</sup> The clear implication is that these

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<sup>5</sup> The United States and Russia have other differences in their approach to proliferation. For example, Russia has ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) while the United States has not.

<sup>6</sup> See speeches by Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov at the May 23/24, 2014, Moscow Conference on International Security, sponsored by Russia's Defense Ministry. These speeches argue that color revolutions are a new form of warfare invented by

actions are a model for taking similar steps against Russia. President Putin (like many other Russians) also remains bitter over NATO expansion, which he believes the United States promised would not happen if the then-Soviet Union acquiesced in German re-unification.<sup>7</sup> Russian concern on this score was heightened by NATO's declaration at its 2008 Bucharest summit that Ukraine and Georgia "will become members of NATO."

Despite these differences, for two decades, under administrations of both parties, American foreign policy has sought to build on shared interests to forge a new relationship to replace the confrontational legacy of the Cold War. Unfortunately, recent developments suggest that we are further away from that productive new relationship than many thought and most hoped. In the long-term the United States should continue to seek such a new relationship. In the short term, however, that effort has failed.

### **Growing Cause for Concern**

Russia's global importance has a negative side. In addition to the areas noted above, Russia is also important because—as recent events in Ukraine make clear—it has the potential to disrupt and destabilize efforts to promote security, stability and peaceful resolution of disputes in important regions.<sup>8</sup> Ukraine, while not fundamentally an issue between Russia and the United States or NATO, must

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Western governments seeking to remove independently minded national governments in favor of ones that are controlled by the West. They also assert that much of the Arab Spring was also fomented by the West.

<sup>7</sup> While the United States rejects this view of history, Russians genuinely believe it. For one explanation for Russian belief, see Mary Elise Sarotte, "A Broken Promise? What the West Really Told Moscow About NATO Expansion," *Foreign Affairs*, Sep-Oct 2014, pp. 90-97. For an illustration that at least some Russians understood there was no promise, see Maxim Korshunov's October 16, 2014, interview with former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev in *Russia Beyond the Headlines*. Available at: [http://rbth.com/international/2014/10/16/mikhail\\_gorbachev\\_i\\_am\\_against\\_all\\_walls\\_40673.html](http://rbth.com/international/2014/10/16/mikhail_gorbachev_i_am_against_all_walls_40673.html)

<sup>8</sup> Many Russians argue that it is U.S. actions in Iraq, Libya, Kosovo and elsewhere that are the real threat to international stability. They cite Kosovo, in particular, as a parallel to Russia's detaching Crimea from Ukraine.

be seen against the background of growing hostility by the Russian leadership (most particularly President Putin) to the West in general and the United States in particular. Recent causes for concern include:

- The 2008 military invasion of Georgia including the Russian assertion that Abkhazia and South Ossetia should be recognized as “independent” states.
- The 2010 Russian military doctrine, which can be read as asserting that NATO and the United States are the greatest threats to Russia’s security.
- President Putin casting himself in major speeches as leader of forces of “traditional” as opposed to Western values, coupled with a near-mystic stress on the special mission of the Russian people, in language reminiscent of historic characterization of Moscow as the “third Rome.”
- Some aspects of Russian military planning and doctrine.
- The annexation of Crimea, the first time that one nation has seized and annexed territory from another in Europe since the end of World War II, and one where Russia was in direct violation of pledges subscribed to in the Helsinki Final Act and the Budapest Memorandum of 1994.
- Continuing Russian military support for separatists in Eastern Ukraine, including provision of military equipment and Russian military incursions into Ukrainian territory.
- The violation by the Russian Federation of its obligations under the INF Treaty not to possess, produce, or flight-test a ground-launched cruise missile (GLCM) with a range capability of 500 km to 5,500 km.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> United States Department of State, *Adherence to and Compliance with Arms Control, Nonproliferation, and Disarmament Agreements and Commitments*, July 2014, p.8.

It is important not to characterize Ukraine and Georgia exclusively as a dispute between Russia and NATO. These situations erupted essentially as disputes between Russia and other former Soviet republics. At the same time, the disputes have a serious impact on the security of NATO countries. Triggering events for both Georgia and Ukraine were in part Russian fear of progress in these states' attempts to integrate with the West, either militarily or economically. President Putin (like many other plausible Russian leaders) is willing to use economic pressure and military force to assert what Russia believes – wrongly in the view of virtually all other countries– to be its prerogatives in the near abroad. Such actions impinge on Western interests and raise particular concerns for some specific NATO Allies (e.g., Baltics).

One possible explanation for the growing anti-Western element in Russian policy is internal. Domestic and international policies and politics are intertwined in any country. Russia is no exception. President Putin's overwhelming popularity in his first two terms rested in part on the significant, sustained growth of the Russian economy and the resulting widespread increase in prosperity among many Russians. As the economy has faltered and at least some opposition has emerged since his current return to power, it is not entirely surprising to see the Putin Administration following the common practice of authoritarian rulers to hype external threats and to encourage citizens to rally round the flag (and thus around the leader and his regime) as a response to those threats.<sup>10</sup> There is little doubt that there are elements of this approach in the current anti-Western stance of the Russian government.

It would be a mistake, however, to assume that the current Russian demonization of the West, including America, is simply a cynical domestic political ploy. President Putin and his increasingly like-minded and shrinking circle of close advisors probably really believe that the so-called “color revolutions” were fomented by the West and are—in at least some sense—rehearsals for a desired similar effort directed against Russia. They also appear to

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<sup>10</sup> Putin's approval rating dropped from 83% in 2008 to 54% in 2013 but has since rebounded to 83%. Julie Ray and Neli Esipova, “Russian Approval of Putin Soars to Highest Level in Years,” [Gallup World](http://www.gallup.com/poll/), July 18, 2014 (<http://www.gallup.com/poll/>). It remains at very high levels as of this writing.

believe that the United States (and through it NATO) is an enemy of Russia and seeks to prevent the restoration of Russia to its rightful place in the world. Finally, recent speeches by President Putin suggesting that Russia is the guardian of traditional morality and culture against the growing decadence of the West probably reflect the views of many Russians.<sup>11</sup>

### **Principles for Responding to Russian Actions**

It is neither appropriate nor feasible for a report such as this to cover tactical or near-term responses to the ongoing crisis in Ukraine. Such responses must depend on an ongoing assessment of Russian actions, on internal Ukrainian developments, and on the reaction of other states, especially our NATO Allies. These actions will change and develop over what shows every sign of being a prolonged (years) period of difficult relations. There are, however, some enduring principles that the United States should follow.

**Recognize the reality of a significant anti-American component in the current Russian approach to the U.S. - Russian relationship.** Since the end of the Cold War, administrations of both U.S. political parties have stressed that the United States did not see Russia as an imminent threat and that we sought to build a true partnership between our two countries. It is time to accept that “partnership” is an incomplete description and to devise a new model for describing our relationship. The term “new Cold War” is neither accurate nor helpful. The immediate issues are regional, not global, and (except among some extreme nationalists in Europe) the ideological content of the Putin vision has not inspired adherents outside Russia. But if there is no new Cold War, at a minimum there is now a significant adversarial component to our relationship from the Russian standpoint. The United States has not, does not, and should not seek an adversarial relationship and should continue its efforts to move to a more cooperative model. But many Russians, especially in President Putin’s inner circle, have built a

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<sup>11</sup> Some, including at least one ISAB member, would consider that this description of President Putin and his inner circle overstates the degree to which they think in strategic terms. In this view, Putin is primarily an opportunist who reflexively seeks to expand Russia’s power whenever he believes he can get away with it. For a related view, see Tony Brenton, “It’s time to back away from the Russian wolf,” *The Telegraph (London)*, September 10, 2014.

significant anti-American component into their national security thinking over the years and we need to recognize both that reality and the fact that it has been translated into significant actions that challenge our interests and values.

Protecting our interests while seeking a more cooperative attitude will require finding an approach that preserves important ongoing areas of cooperation while managing the increasingly confrontational aspects of our relationship. We should not expect this to be easy.

**Avoid actions that could be used to legitimate the changing of Ukraine's national borders or the future legitimacy of changing borders by force or the threat of force.** In recent decades states have fragmented into smaller states, either peacefully (Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia) or violently (Yugoslavia). The annexation of Crimea, however, is the only European incorporation of the territory of one state into another by force or the threat of force since the end of the Second World War. It thus represents a long-term challenge to Europe's stability. The seriousness of the situation is heightened both by the continuing Russian efforts to destabilize, divide, and dominate Ukraine and by the uncertainty of Russian tactics as they pursue their objective that Ukraine never join NATO and routinely defer to Russia on security issues. The United States has decided to continue some engagements with Russia on a case-by-case basis while curtailing lower-priority activities and avoiding any new initiatives that could be seen as "letting bygones be bygones" or regarding Russia's actions in Ukraine as simply a routine problem rather than a fundamental challenge to strategic stability. This policy should continue, with individual decisions made based on what is best for U.S. national interests and those of our allies.

**Recognize that there are areas of cooperation that are sufficiently important to both the United States and (presumably) the Russian Federation that cooperation should continue.** There are several areas where continued involvement with Russia is in the U.S. (and Western) interest. An illustrative (but not exhaustive) list of some of the most important might include:

- Implementation of existing treaties, including New START implementation (both because of their intrinsic importance and to show commitment to international agreements). During times of tension,

transparency and openness are important contributors to strategic stability. Therefore, in addition to New START, the United States should place particular emphasis on the Open Skies Treaty, which allows overflights for determining large scale troop movements, and on the politically-binding 2011 Vienna Document, which provides a detailed regime of observation and data exchange. In addition, while the United States should press Russia to correct its Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty violation, the United States should not withdraw from INF. Finally, the United States should be open to any unexpected arms control opportunities, including transparency on non-strategic nuclear weapons.

- Efforts to preserve the northern route into Afghanistan (because of our need for both resupply and the drawdown) as well as cooperation in efforts to stabilize Afghanistan and prevent its reemergence as a terrorist base after the U.S. withdrawal. More generally, cooperation in countering terrorism, terrorist supported groups and drug trafficking is in our mutual interest and should continue.
- Nonproliferation cooperation, especially with respect to Iran where Russia is integral to meeting our national security objectives and has generally been cooperative in negotiations with Iran on limiting its nuclear program.
- Cooperation on nuclear security, including the Cooperative Threat Reduction program if Russia revises its recent decision to curtail that activity. Improving the security of nuclear weapons and materials in Russia and elsewhere is in the security interests of both states and of international stability generally.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> It is unclear whether the November 2014 Russian decision not to participate in the final Nuclear Security Summit is simply a rejection of U.S. leadership or a fundamental change in the Russian approach to nuclear security outside of its territory. We suspect the former but have not analyzed the issue.



- Cooperation in the Arctic. Arctic security and stability is of vital interest to the United States, to Russia, and to other Arctic nations. The Arctic is warming at an unprecedented rate, making its vast resources and navigation potential of great global interest. Russia has the longest Arctic coastline, vast energy and mining resources ripe for exploitation, and maritime, shipping and fishing interests as well. Most current U.S. Arctic cooperation is multinational through the Arctic Council, which the United States will chair beginning next year.<sup>13</sup> U.S. leadership of the Arctic Council depends in good measure on advancing cooperative mechanisms on communications, observations, capabilities for search and rescue and oil spill response, as well as managing methane and black carbon releases. To implement this agenda, the United States needs to continue to cooperate with Russia in order to improve strategic stability in this increasingly vital region.

There is obvious tension between not legitimizing the Crimea annexation or Russia's destabilizing actions in Eastern Ukraine and continuing cooperation in other important areas. The principles we advocate should not be taken as specific prescriptions but as broad guidelines. Day-to-day policy implementation must, of course, continuously balance conflicting aims.

**Ensure the reliability and will of NATO are not called into question.** A major threat to strategic stability is that Russia may misread NATO's measured response to aggression against a non-NATO member as an indication that the United States and other NATO member states would not live up to their North Atlantic Treaty Article 5 responsibilities in case of similar aggression against a NATO state in the future, justified, supposedly, by the need to support Russian-speakers within a state such as Estonia. Such a Russian move is unlikely. While we cannot discount the possibility that Crimea and the subsequent Russian actions to destabilize Eastern Ukraine will become a first step toward some form of expanded Russian Empire, we currently have no concrete evidence that Russian

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<sup>13</sup> The eight members of the Arctic Council are Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States. Chairmanship rotates; the United States will chair the Council from 2015-2017.

actions in Ukraine are part of an irredentist plot to create a new “greater Russia.” Our track record on predicting Russian behavior since the end of the Cold War, however, is mixed at best; a year ago most American experts would have regarded the annexation of Crimea as far-fetched. Even if Russia has no further territorial aspirations, strategic stability would be undermined if either Russia or our NATO Allies came to doubt U.S. resolve to defend those Allies.

The United States, along with its NATO Allies, has already begun to deal with these concerns by increasing rotational deployments of ground troops to Central European Allies, by pre-positioning of equipment, by increasing Black Sea naval presence, by supporting a new NATO rapid reaction force, by increased air operations and by the announcement of a U.S. planned one billion dollar fund (which is subject to appropriation) to bolster European security and reassure newer U.S. allies.<sup>14</sup> All these activities should continue. In the future, if Russian actions pose a direct explicit threat to a NATO country, NATO, led by the United States, would need to reconsider the permanent stationing of limited conventional forces in Central Europe.<sup>15</sup> Such forces should be configured for defense, not offense, and should not be exclusively American. Less clearly, if continued Russian incursions into Ukraine and active military support of Ukrainian separatists suggest a future Russian willingness to threaten NATO states, NATO may want to reconsider its position. In such a case, NATO would need to make it clear that the purpose of any permanent stationing of forces in Central Europe was deterrence and reassurance related to Russia and NATO, not preparation for military involvement in Ukraine. While it is clearly premature to implement such a step now, the United States and its NATO Allies should quietly evaluate potential

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<sup>14</sup> For details see White House Fact Sheets “European Reassurance Initiative and Other U.S. Efforts in Support of NATO Allies and Partners,” June 3, 2014, and “NATO and U.S. Efforts in Support of NATO Partners, Including Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia.” September 5, 2014.

<sup>15</sup> Stationing such forces would not be inconsistent with the May 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act in which “NATO reiterates that **in the current and foreseeable security environment** [emphasis added], the Alliance will carry out its collective defence and other missions by ensuring the necessary interoperability, integration, and capability for reinforcement rather than by additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces.” If future Russian actions make it advisable to reconsider stationing forces on the territory of Central European NATO Allies, NATO would note the obvious fact that the “current security environment” of 1997 has changed.

composition, costs, and missions for such a force in order to be prepared for a possible future decision.

**Prepare NATO to deter or respond to new provocations.** The destabilization and subsequent annexation of Crimea was coolly and professionally executed, even recognizing that Russia's actions were aided by considerable genuine local support and the pre-crisis presence of several thousand Russian military personnel. Thwarting such tactics requires a combination of internal and external security responses. It is unclear whether NATO has thought through the appropriate response to this new form of aggression, were it to be applied to the Baltic States.<sup>16</sup> Although there is no current evidence that Russia contemplates such a move, as a hedge against an uncertain future, NATO needs to develop at least a rudimentary counter-strategy and the United States needs to lead the way. This will not be easy. The most effective response may well be non-military. But it may also require support for internal defenses, heretofore an exclusively national responsibility. Contingency planning is a regular NATO function, but planning for a robust internal defense of specific states is very different from anything NATO has done before, and will involve different (or at least additional) agencies and constituencies in individual allied countries.

**Seek long-term opportunities for increasing European ability to stand up to Russian economic pressure.** Economic realities, including dependence on Russian energy, means that our European Allies face costs in imposing sanctions and preparing to resist aggression that we do not. In the short-term, that is a fact of life to be managed (to the extent possible) by skillful diplomacy. As a hedge against a future similar confrontation, the United States should encourage and assist our Allies to reduce Russian leverage over Western Europe. One obvious step would be to increase the diversity of energy supply to Europe, including through export of U.S. liquefied natural gas. There are almost certainly others. It is, however, important to recognize that, while energy diversification is desirable, replacing the 30 percent of European gas (more for some countries) that now

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<sup>16</sup> NATO has begun to consider countering non-traditional forms of aggression. The September 2014 Wales summit statement agreed that cyber-attacks could, in some circumstances, be cause for invoking Article 5 obligations on collective defense.

originates in Russia will take years and require significant investment, if it can be done at all. At the same time, it will be important to help Ukraine with its economic and political development. The European Union, along with individual states (including the United States and Canada) should be directly involved. The economic costs are a direct contribution both to Western security and to convincing Russia that its pressure on Ukraine will not work.

**Avoid a destabilizing transformation of the crisis.** The annexation of Crimea and continued attempts to destabilize eastern Ukraine constitute a crisis. This crisis involves nuclear states but is not a nuclear crisis and we should take no action implying otherwise. The United States and NATO have a clear nuclear policy. Nothing about the Ukrainian crisis warrants changing that policy. Therefore, it would be inappropriate and destabilizing to deploy NATO nuclear weapons to Central Europe. It would also send the wrong message to both Russia and our NATO Allies to make significant reductions in U.S. nuclear weapons stored in Europe or in existing burden sharing arrangements. The retention of U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe and the rejection of their unilateral reduction have been reaffirmed twice by NATO leaders, at the highest levels, in recent years. This formal harmony masks considerable disagreement between and within NATO members, including within the United States. Unless, however, new negotiations with Russia lead to an agreement on non-strategic nuclear weapons (an unlikely event in the current international environment), neither the United States nor NATO should reconsider its position on retention of U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe until the current crisis is resolved. Unilateral reductions could be seen by both the Putin regime and our allies as a lessening of U.S. support in the face of a more assertive Russia.<sup>17</sup>

**Maintain channels of communication where possible, especially with the Russian military.** Even in the most confrontational periods of the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union maintained significant, substantive discussions in some mutually important areas. For much of the Cold War, arms control served

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<sup>17</sup> The ISAB has not examined the wisdom of long-term retention of U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe. Individual ISAB members hold a variety of different views. Our concern in this paper is to avoid inadvertently sending inaccurate signals to Russia or our NATO Allies.

as one such channel, but current conditions make a significant discussion of arms control unlikely. In addition to diplomatic and other political channels, the United States should seek to build a strong dialogue in military-to-military channels. There are two overriding risks if the current situation worsens. One would arise if Russia misjudged U.S. and NATO willingness to defend the Baltic States. The second would be inadvertent escalation based on misreading one another's military doctrine (discussed below) or actions. Mutual understanding between the Russian and American militaries would reduce both these risks.

### **Resuming and Expanding Engagement**

It is important to recognize the distinction between "engagement" and "communication." The latter is almost always a good idea, if only to keep channels open and to probe Russian thinking and explain our own. Communications on many levels continued (though often in a stilted fashion) during the darkest days of the Cold War.

In contrast, engagement, as the term is used in this paper, implies a serious effort to seek out fruitful opportunities for genuine cooperation, including in new areas. Engagement is a tool to advance U.S. national interests, not a reward for Russian behavior. To avoid the implication that we are indifferent to ongoing Russian actions or have adopted a "forgive and forget" attitude, the United States has concluded that, in general, an "arm's length" relationship with the Russian Federation is appropriate and that expanding engagement into new areas would be inappropriate until the situation in Central Europe clarifies. Ongoing engagement activities are currently being examined on a case by case basis and being continued or curtailed as appropriate to the protection of U.S. and allied interests. This policy should continue.

As of November 20, 2014, the United Nations reported almost a thousand deaths since the September 2014 ceasefire in Ukraine while NATO commander General Philip Breedlove announced on November 12 that NATO had seen

Russian military equipment and troops entering Ukraine.<sup>18</sup> It would be premature to resume, let alone expand, engagement until the current Russian destabilizing actions in Eastern Ukraine cease. Even then, it is unlikely that the annexation of Crimea can be reversed. If it is not, then sooner or later we will settle into a pattern where we do not recognize Crimea as part of Russia but resume regular interactions with the Russian Federation. The Cold War analogue is the U.S. refusal to recognize the incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union, a position we maintained consistently but one which did not prevent periods of more-or-less normal and productive relations with the Soviet Union. It may take years to find the right model of interaction that lets the bilateral relationship move forward without implying a legitimization of the Crimea annexation or subsequent Russian actions in Eastern Ukraine (which the United States should continue to steadfastly oppose).

Ultimately, however, the United States will need to accept that the situation in Ukraine (and more broadly, in Europe) has stabilized and thus that it is time for broader engagement with the Russian Federation. The decision that the situation in Europe is sufficiently stable that U.S. interests are best served by resuming or expanding engagement will be difficult whenever it is taken. Indeed, resuming engagement will be a step by step process dependent on ever-changing conditions in and around Ukraine. It is neither possible nor wise to try to establish in advance inflexible criteria for making that decision. Further, promulgating a series of conditions that Russia must meet will be seen by Russia as establishing a pattern of “engaging” only as a reward for behavior acceptable to us and thus will be counterproductive. That said, the following are illustrative of developments that would facilitate improved relations:

- Russia has ceased its attempts to de-stabilize eastern Ukraine and has ceased supporting separatists there.

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<sup>18</sup> United Nations website, “Serious human rights violations persist in eastern Ukraine despite tenuous ceasefire – UN report,”  
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/media.aspx?IsMediaPage=true#sthash.qE2IU51J.dpuf>

- The United States, NATO and Ukraine all have confidence that Russia's words and behavior demonstrate that it accepts the remaining borders of Ukraine as they exist following the Crimea annexation.
- Russia is not using external pressure on the Ukrainian government (such as withholding energy supplies) to compel Ukraine to accept a confederation approach that would grant the regions a veto on foreign and defense policy.
- The United States has devised and implemented an approach to relations with Crimea that does not depend on accepting the legitimacy of the Crimean annexation. Presumably this would be based on the approach used with the Soviet Union with respect to Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania.
- Russia has continued to be helpful with respect to Iran.

### **Long-term implications for strategic stability**

Strategic stability implies a common understanding of the overall nature of the political relationship, a nuclear posture that reduces incentives to strike first in time of extreme crisis or to engage in an arms race, and both the ability to manage crises and prevent their escalation and the recognition that it is imperative to do so. The continuation of the current situation would undermine all these aspects of stability. Because Russia appears uninterested in initiating steps to improve long-term strategic stability, U.S. actions will be crucial.

**Work to reduce mutual suspicion with Russia.** Even if the Ukrainian crisis can be resolved satisfactorily, a truly stable relationship will be exceptionally difficult as long as Russia believes the United States is taking active measures to destabilize it and render it vulnerable to U.S. attack. Many Russian leaders have long believed that military capabilities such as ballistic missile defense, Prompt Global Strike and precision cruise missiles, which the United States plans or has implemented for non-Russian contingencies, are actually part of a U.S. plan to gain the ability for a first strike on Russia while blunting or eliminating Russia's ability

to retaliate. More recently, the Russian leadership appears to believe that the United States seeks to change the nature of the Russian government and that the democratic revolutions which took place in Central European states were instigated by the United States as rehearsals for similar steps against Russia. Long-term strategic stability, let alone partnership, is unlikely unless the United States can find a mechanism to dissuade Russia from these beliefs.

It is not clear how such reassurance can be accomplished. Simple statements by the United States, no matter how eloquent, will not be enough, primarily because the United States tends to use the wrong approach in persuading Russia of its benign intentions. For example, when Russia expresses concern that capabilities such as ballistic missile defense or Prompt Global Strike threaten Russian national security, the United States explains that they are being developed for non-Russian reasons. When Russia shows continued concern, U.S. analysts explain in more detail, assuming that the Russians simply don't understand. This is ineffective. Russians understand what we are saying; they just don't believe it. In part this is because they assume that all governments lie, as theirs did so often during the Cold War and continues to do today (for example in concealing the extent of Russian involvement in Ukraine), and in part, it reflects a deep suspicion of U.S. attitudes toward Russia. Thus, the United States should not simply seek to convince Russia it has no hostile intentions but should look for explicit confidence building measures. In doing so, we will need to pay special attention to discerning which Russian concerns are genuinely held and not simply a pretext for actions taken for other geopolitical reasons. Reassuring Russia that the United States does not seek to overthrow its government is further complicated because, while it is true that the United States has no intention of fomenting an insurrection in Russia, it is equally true that we deplore the rising authoritarianism of the Russian system and would welcome its reversal. The United States cannot and should not lessen its moral support for peaceful democratic change nor tamely accept restrictions on human rights organizations based on some Russian theory that all such groups are subversive. At the same time our support for democracy movements must be carried out consistent with the Helsinki Final Act and must recognize that any change in the Russian political system must come from within, based on genuine forces within Russia.



Confidence building measures with respect to the U.S. military threat to Russian strategic forces are relatively easy to devise but will be difficult to negotiate. Particularly with respect to ballistic missile defenses, any steps likely to reassure the Russians will raise significant policy issues. The United States cannot accept legal restrictions on military capabilities designed for non-Russian contingencies. It may, however, be able to agree to a broad set of arms control measures involving greater transparency, providing Russia with future procurement plans, and agreeing not to change those plans without significant advance notification. It should also be able to provide high level formal political assurances concerning U.S. intent. We believe there should be a serious interagency review of possible options.<sup>19</sup> This review should also include consideration of confidence-building measures that the West will need from Russia. The process of finally determining these measures should be conducted at NATO (and with NATO partners, including Ukraine), so all our Allies and partners are fully engaged.

Reassuring Russia will not, by itself, be sufficient to bring about strategic stability in Europe. It is equally necessary for Russia to reassure the United States and Russia's neighbors that it will not seek to undermine their security, especially by using force or the threat of force to attempt to alter national boundaries or to interfere in the internal affairs of its neighbors. To be credible, this reassurance will need to include more than words. It is already true that "trust" in Russia will take a long time to restore, even if President Putin shifts his behavior immediately, especially in regard to southeastern Ukraine and his opposition to the government in Kiev being able to govern in that part of the country. President Ronald Reagan said of relations with the Soviet Union: "Trust but verify." The touchstone with Vladimir Putin's Russia needs to be "Verify and then, if there are real changes in behavior, begin to trust."

**Ensure some form of strategic arms control remains in effect after the expiration of New START.** Arms control remains an important tool of strategic stability. Based on recent Russian attitudes (which the United States should

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<sup>19</sup> The ISAB has not reviewed specific proposals and believes it is premature to do so. Individual members vary considerably in their attitude toward such measures.

continue to challenge) the prospects for additional arms control progress in the next few years currently appear limited. As the expiration of New START approaches in 2021, however, that situation may change. It is in the interests of neither country to see New START expire without replacement. Russia has historically wanted clear legal regulation of the nuclear balance, although it is not certain that this attitude will continue given the increasing anti-American aspects of Russian foreign policy. The United States will have a robust agenda for the next round of arms control. This is not the place to analyze prospects for future arms control. If, however, it proves impossible to reach significant new agreements, at an absolute minimum the United States should seek to extend New START in order to retain the important transparency it provides. Transparency leads to predictability and predictability enhances stability.

**Improve the ability to control escalation in a crisis.** An important characteristic of a stable strategic system is the ability to manage crises and prevent their escalation. Both Russian and U.S. military modernization and doctrinal innovations have made this more complicated. There is a strong possibility that each side will misjudge the actions of the other in a crisis. To reduce the danger, it is important to rebuild military-to-military contacts on security issues and to maintain and improve both technical and political channels for communication in crises. As part of this effort, the United States should seek military-to-military discussions on escalation management, including if possible table top exercises on controlling escalation in a crisis. If Russia is unwilling to engage in such discussions, this may be an area where unofficial dialogue can be helpful.

**Maintain NATO solidarity.** Long-term strategic stability will be enhanced if the Russian leadership continues to believe that NATO will honor its North Atlantic Treaty Article 5 commitments and our NATO Allies continue to believe in U.S. readiness to come to their defense. NATO is currently more or less united on a strong response to Russia, although it is unclear whether NATO Allies will actually increase military spending. It will be important—and challenging—to maintain these beliefs over time as the immediate crisis recedes into the past.

**Maintain an appropriate long-term focus on Russia and Central Europe.** In recent years, many in Europe – and some U.S. critics as well – have

been concerned that the United States has paid decreasing attention to Europe, not only in terms of the future of NATO but also in terms of relations with the European Union. This concern was exacerbated by discussion of a shift in U.S. attention toward Asia, described either as “rebalancing” or as a “pivot.” Obviously the United States is a Pacific as well as an Atlantic power and therefore the rise in power and influence of China demands U.S. attention and engagement. But the justified emphasis on the Asia-Pacific has been seen by many – likely including Putin and other Russian leaders – as entailing a shift of American attention away from Europe. Whether this perceived relative decrease of U.S. strategic engagement in Europe contributed to Russian behavior towards Ukraine is unknowable and, if Russian President Putin thought he could take advantage of a relatively less-attentive United States, he has already been proved mistaken. But perceptions of reduced U.S. attention to Europe need to be taken to heart as the United States considers the priority that Europe will have in American foreign and security policy in the future.

Long term stability in Europe will require reassuring the NATO Allies, as well as other European countries that are in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and the Partnership for Peace, that the United States remains engaged and committed to Europe. While the rebalancing to Asia will continue to be important, as will the claims of the Middle East and other regions, they must not come at the expense of continuing U.S. engagement with and reassurances to Europe. This engagement must cover all dimensions – political, economic, and security – and must involve both NATO and the European Union and must take place, and be seen to take place, at all levels in all relevant government agencies, especially in the White House, State Department, and Defense Department.

**Ukraine and stability.** True strategic stability in Europe requires stability for Ukraine, not only because such an outcome is critical to mending Russia’s relations with the United States and Western Europe, but also because a Ukraine whose status is contested would be a major source of tension and conflict. An internally cohesive, democratic, and economically viable Ukraine would be in the interests of all involved. While achieving that result will be difficult, it should be U.S. policy to promote it. Such a Ukraine (like all other states) should be free to make its own decisions on security – including whether it should seek to join

NATO (which would require the consent of all existing members), pursue a policy of armed neutrality, or take some other course – and to make those decisions in its own time and not under duress.

Russia has declared that it would regard Ukrainian membership in NATO as a threat. In response, some commentators in both Russia and the United States have suggested that to improve long-term stability Ukraine should issue a formal declaration (presumably to be endorsed by NATO and Russia) that it would not seek NATO membership but would remain unaligned in a similar status to Finland during the Cold War. This proposal now appears to have been officially endorsed by the Russian government. In a November 18 interview on BBC, President Vladimir Putin's spokesman, Dmitri Peskov called for "a 100% guarantee that no-one would think about Ukraine joining NATO."<sup>20</sup>

In the near term, Ukrainian membership in NATO is unlikely. Only a minority (although a growing one) within Ukraine support such membership and support varies wildly within the country with very strong support in Western Ukraine and almost no support in the east.<sup>21</sup> Further, it is not at all clear that European members of NATO will support Ukrainian membership now or in the future. Notwithstanding these facts, U.S. support for such a declaration would be a mistake. NATO's basic policy, endorsed by the United States, is that it will not declare any European nation *a priori* permanently excluded from NATO nor will it allow a third-party a veto over NATO membership. U.S. support for any such declaration would be inconsistent with that policy and, in current circumstances, could appear to be an endorsement of Russia's claims and actions regarding Ukraine.

Whether Ukraine joins NATO, professes neutrality or retains its current status, strategic stability would be enhanced by increasing confidence that neither Russia nor NATO is preparing a military threat. The European Leadership

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<sup>20</sup> BBC Europe on-line (<http://www.bbc.com/news/world/europe/>), November 18, 2014.

<sup>21</sup> "Ukrainians supporting NATO membership in minority – poll." *Interfax-Ukraine*, May 14, 2014, reports 36.7% support and 41.6% opposition to NATO membership nationwide, a substantial increase in support since the start of the crisis.

Network, a group of retired senior government and military officials (including from Russia) recently stated:

“We therefore urge all sides participating in the Vienna Document process to support increases to the evaluation visit quota and to consider introducing regional military liaison missions - that is, reciprocal agreements between nations that would permit small numbers of officers to monitor activities in defined regions in the Euro-Atlantic area.”<sup>22</sup>

In addition to supporting these proposals, the United States should consider offering the resources of Sandia National Laboratories’ Cooperative Monitoring Center for sensor deployment along the Russo-Ukrainian border. Any arrangements should be under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and should involve strict reciprocity, thus responding to stated Russian concerns of potential NATO use of Ukraine as an avenue for attack. Finally, especially if Ukraine does not adopt formal neutrality, NATO and the United States should devise and support an agreement with Russia to demonstrate that there are no NATO nuclear weapons stationed in Ukraine, and no Russian nuclear weapons in Crimea.<sup>23</sup>

**An important caveat.** It is important to recognize that these steps, even if successfully implemented, cannot by themselves transform the relationship

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<sup>22</sup> European Leadership Network, Task Force on Cooperation in Greater Europe. *Crisis Management in Europe in the Context of Events in Ukraine*, July 2014, p.4. The Vienna Document includes an extensive annual exchange of information on military units and deployments and provides for “evaluation visits” to evaluate this data. The quota of such visits is determined by a complex process but is in no case more than two visits a month.

<sup>23</sup> In a November 12, 2014, interview with Radio Liberty, NATO Supreme Allied Commander General Philip Breedlove said that Russia was deploying missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads in Crimea but that NATO could not confirm there were nuclear warheads in this region. Nuclear warheads were stationed in Crimea during the Cold War and their reintroduction may well be attractive to the Russian military. There are a variety of approaches that could be used to implement our recommendation to demonstrate that both Crimea and the rest of Ukraine remain nuclear free. The ISAB has not examined procedural issues and takes no position on the appropriate approach.

between Russia and the West. They can improve strategic stability but it will take Russian actions as well as American and Western ones to establish the type of relationship we seek. Until the attitude and actions of the Russian leadership change, there will remain a significant adversarial component to the relationship. That leadership is dominated by Vladimir Putin, who can (and probably will) remain President of the Russian Federation for another ten years. Thus, while continuing to seek improved relations, the United States must also prepare for the need to advance and defend its and its allies' interests under unfavorable as well as favorable conditions.

### **Opportunities for Expanded Engagement When Appropriate**

Although it is impossible to predict when it will happen, the time will come when it is once again appropriate to seek expanded cooperation and engagement with the Russian Federation beyond the areas listed above where it is in U.S. and allied interest to continue cooperation even under today's conditions. At that time, we believe the following should be considered:

- expanded space cooperation;
- bilateral (as opposed to the current multilateral) cooperation in the Arctic;
- expanded cooperation in science;
- enhanced commercial cooperation;
- cooperation in dealing with climate change;
- joint research to develop U.S.-Russian cooperation in strategic stability and security, such as verification technologies to support arms control and non-proliferation;
- altered and expanded nuclear security cooperation;

- expanded cooperation in counter-terrorism; and
- revitalized cooperation under the NATO-Russia Founding Act.

Details of our recommendations for future engagement are included in Appendix B. Although the specific examples we give in that appendix are illustrative and incomplete, we believe the broad areas we have listed are the ones most likely to serve U.S. interests.

It is probable that engagement will expand gradually and can thus be monitored and managed by the normal process of government. If and when, however, there is a dramatic change in political conditions calling for exploration of multiple areas, the United States should consider forming a small working group of senior officials (active or retired) from both Russia and the United States to explore, in detail, opportunities for collaboration on key long-term issues.

### **Unofficial Engagement**

As was repeatedly demonstrated during the Cold War, unofficial (or semi-official) dialogue can be especially valuable when tensions between major powers limit the opportunities for fruitful official dialogue. The United States should encourage such dialogue, while understanding that if the anti-American attitude of the Russian government deepens and Russian authoritarianism accelerates, Russian participants may be unwilling to go beyond approved talking points. To encourage continued candid engagement without getting individual Russian interlocutors in trouble, U.S. participants, especially those with government connections should avoid giving any publicity to the views or participation of specific participants. This should be made a condition of any U.S. government funding or sponsorship.

There are four particular areas where the Administration should encourage (and continue to fund) unofficial (Track 1.5/Track 2) engagement:

- **Reduce the risk of miscalculation in crisis.** Reducing this risk may be facilitated by a series of workshops, seminars and table-top exercises

between Russians and Americans on how our competing visions of doctrine and capabilities might play out in a confrontation or crisis where the use of force is a real possibility. Russia may be unwilling to have these discussions occur at the government level. If so, and if appropriate Russians are willing to participate, they should be held at an unofficial level. They should not involve only academic specialists, who may lack a clear understanding of military behavior in crisis. Therefore they should be conducted at the Track 2 level with heavy participation by retired senior military officers on both sides along with other experts who understand the issues and have a good sense of how their governments and publics would respond to a crisis.

- **Prepare for eventual resumption of more normal relations.** The crisis in Ukraine has overshadowed but not eliminated the many strategic issues (for example ballistic missile defense, conventional strategic strike, non-strategic nuclear weapons, treaty compliance, military transparency, policy differences in approaches to regional issues) that divide the United States and the Russian Federation. Continued discussion between non-government expert groups can help prepare for more substantive engagement in the future. In addition to dealing with current issues, these unofficial discussions should explore the implications of the proliferation of weapons that can have strategic impact including conventional strategic strike (including but not limited to Prompt Global Strike), space weapons and cyber weapons. The interactions among these weapons and their associated doctrines are complex and their effect on strategic stability is a subject of considerable debate which needs to continue. Such discussions should also include stability management and deterrence in today's security environment. On a selective basis, the United States should allow participation by government employees (in a "personal" capacity)<sup>24</sup> in these activities.

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<sup>24</sup> "Personal capacity" is an accepted euphemism that allows government participants in non-governmental dialogues to go beyond existing policy in their discussions. It is most credible for relatively junior participants.



- **Seek ways to reduce mistrust.** Earlier in this paper we noted the fear on the part of many leading Russians that the United States seeks to foment the internal overthrow of the ruling Russian government, the importance of providing reassurance that this is not the case and our lack of good ideas for how to do so. The experts on what would reassure Russia are, of course, the Russians. Therefore, a separate subject for discussion would be what practical steps the United States can take to reassure Russia it does not have, or plan to have, an active program for destabilizing or even replacing the Government of the Russian Federation. It is unclear who the appropriate interlocutors for such a dialogue would be, in part because the message is a nuanced one, balancing support for democracy and human rights with respect for Russian sovereignty. The most productive path might be discussions between small numbers of former senior officials.
- **Lay the groundwork for improved long-term relationships.** The fact that building a strategic partnership with Russia has proven difficult does not alter the importance of continuing the effort. It does, however, require a longer term focus. The rising generation in Russia is more likely to have international experience, will in time rise to positions of power, may be less influenced by Cold War thinking than its elders, and thus needs to be an especial target of engagement and the building of mutual trust.<sup>25</sup> The United States should encourage all forms of engagement with this rising generation, modeling its efforts on the people-to-people efforts of decades past, as well as including members of this generation (on both sides) in unofficial dialogues.

It is not feasible to coordinate these various unofficial interactions in an attempt to forge some unified national strategy. At a time of reduced and more stilted official dialogue, however, it is important to capture the results of unofficial

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<sup>25</sup> Many members of this generation are deeply nationalistic and anti-American. (This is not a new development. See Sarah E. Mendelson and Theodore P. Gerber “Us and Them: Anti-American Views of the Putin Generation,” *The Washington Quarterly*, Spring 2008). These facts increase the importance of engagement while making it clear that a long-term effort is necessary.

discussions on a systematic basis. This may require formally designating an office within the State Department to reach out to Track 2 participants and ensure the results of their discussions are captured and disseminated within the U.S. government.

## **Conclusion**

This has been a discouraging but realistic report. Many members of the International Security Advisory Board have spent decades seeking to build positive relations with the Russian Federation. It is disheartening to observe the current situation and important to recognize the situation for what it is, but it is also important not to become too discouraged. Recall that the early 1980s was characterized by speeches about an evil empire and Soviet fears of an impending NATO attack. Yet the United States and the Soviet Union found ways to work together to our mutual benefit. The United States and Russia will do so as well. That will require efforts on both sides and the United States must be open to seizing opportunities where they exist. This paper has set forth various recommendations, summarized for convenience in Appendix A. The first step, however, is to recognize where we are starting from. Only then can we forge a path from the tension of today to the genuine partnership with Russia that has been—and should remain—a major U.S. objective since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

## **APPENDIX A – Summary of Recommendations**

The following recommendations, both explicit and implied, derived from this paper are listed below and numbered sequentially for convenience. Page numbers in parentheses indicate where they are discussed in the main text.

### **Responding to Current Russian Actions**

*1 – Recognize the reality of a significant anti-American component in the current Russian approach to the U.S. - Russian relationship while continuing efforts to move to a more cooperative model.* (Page 8)

*2 – Avoid actions that might appear to legitimate the changing of Ukraine's national borders or the future legitimacy of changing borders by force or threat of force.* (Page 9)

*3 – Recognize that there are areas of cooperation that are sufficiently important to both the United States and (presumably) the Russian Federation that cooperation must continue, including implementation of existing treaties and ongoing cooperation on Afghanistan, on countering terrorism and drug trafficking, on nonproliferation, on nuclear security, and within the Arctic Council.* (Page 9-11)

*4 – Do not withdraw from the INF Treaty in response to Russia's violation, but rather press Moscow to correct its violation.* (Page 10)

*5 – Ensure the reliability and will of NATO are not called into question and that Russia does not doubt that the United States would live up to its North Atlantic Treaty Article 5 responsibilities in case of aggression.*

- Continue rotational deployments of ground troops to Central European Allies.

- Evaluate potential composition, costs and missions for permanent stationing of limited conventional forces in Central Europe in order to be prepared for a possible future decision. (Page 11-12)

***6 – Prepare NATO to deter or respond to new provocations by developing at least a rudimentary counter-strategy to the type of Russian aggression that led to the annexation of Crimea. (Page 13)***

***7 – Seek long-term opportunities for increasing European ability to stand up to Russian economic pressure by reducing dependence on Russian energy. (Page 13-14)***

***8 – Avoid a destabilizing transformation of the Ukrainian crisis.***

- Do not deploy NATO nuclear weapons to Central Europe.
- Until the current crisis is resolved, do not make significant reductions in nuclear weapons stored in Europe or in existing burden sharing arrangements. (Page 14)

***9 – Maintain channels of communication where possible, especially with the Russian military. (Page 14-15)***

### **Resuming and Expanding Engagement**

***10 – Continue to examine engagement activities on a case by case basis. (Page 16)***

***11 – Recognize that, ultimately, U.S. interests will best be served by resuming or expanding engagement but do not attempt to establish in advance inflexible criteria for making the decision on when such resumption should occur. (Page 16-17)***

## **Long-term implications for strategic stability**

### ***12 – Work to reduce mutual suspicion with Russia.***

- Seek to dissuade Russian leaders from their apparent belief that the United States seeks to destabilize and ultimately replace the Russian government.
- Do not simply assert to Russia that the United States has no hostile intentions but look for explicit confidence building measures.
- Conduct a serious interagency review of possible options for broad arms control measures involving greater transparency, providing Russia with future procurement plans, and agreeing not to change those plans without significant advance notification. Involve NATO in this review.
- Insist on reciprocal measures from Russia. (Page 17-19)

### ***13 – Ensure some form of strategic arms control remains in effect after the expiration of New START. At a minimum seek to extend New START in order to retain the important transparency it provides.*** (Page 19-20)

### ***14 – Improve the ability to control escalation in a crisis by seeking military-to-military discussions on escalation management.*** (Page 20)

### ***15 – Maintain NATO solidarity over time as the immediate crisis recedes into the past in order that the Russian leadership continues to believe that NATO will honor its Article 5 commitments and our NATO Allies continue to believe in U.S. readiness to come to their defense.*** (Page 20)

### ***16 – Maintain an appropriate long-term focus on Russia and Central Europe.***

- Ensure NATO Allies and others that the United States remains engaged and committed to Europe despite the demands of Asia and the Middle East.

- Ensure this engagement is broad, involves both NATO and the European Union and takes place at all levels in all relevant government agencies, including the White House. (Page 20-21)

***17 – Promote an internally cohesive, democratic, and economically viable Ukraine.*** (Page 21-22)

***18 – Continue to reject a Russian veto over Ukrainian NATO membership.***  
(Page 22)

***19 – Increase confidence that neither Russia nor NATO is preparing a military threat associated with Ukraine.***

- Support increases to the evaluation visit quota under the Vienna Document.
- Consider introducing regional military liaison missions that would permit small numbers of officers to monitor activities in defined regions.
- Offer the resources of Sandia National Laboratories' Cooperative Monitoring Center for sensor deployment along the Russo-Ukrainian border under the auspices of the OSCE.
- Devise and support an agreement with Russia to demonstrate that there are no NATO nuclear weapons stationed in Ukraine and no Russian nuclear weapons in Crimea. (Page 22-23)

### **Opportunities for Expanded Engagement When Appropriate**

***20 – When it is once again appropriate to seek expanded cooperation and engagement with the Russian Federation consider the following areas: expanded space cooperation, bilateral cooperation in the Arctic, expanded cooperation in science, enhanced commercial cooperation, cooperation with respect to climate change; joint research to develop U.S.-Russian cooperation in strategic stability***

*and security, altered and expanded nuclear security cooperation, expanded cooperation in counter-terrorism and revitalized cooperation under the NATO-Russia Founding Act. (Page 24-25 and Appendix B)*

*21 – If there is a sudden dramatic change in political conditions, consider forming a small working group of senior officials (active or retired) to explore in detail opportunities for collaboration. (Page 25)*

### **Unofficial Engagement**

*22 – Support and fund unofficial (Track 1.5/Track 2) engagement in the following areas:*

- Reducing the risk of miscalculation in crisis through workshops, seminars and table-top exercises on how competing doctrine and capabilities might play out in a confrontation or crisis.
- Preparing for the ultimate resumption of more normal relations by discussing strategic arms control issues, the implications of the proliferation of addition weapons with strategic impact, and stability management and deterrence in today's security environment.
- Seeking ways to reduce mistrust by discussing what practical steps the United States can take to reassure Russia it neither has nor plans to have an active program for replacing the Government of the Russian Federation.
- Laying the groundwork for improved long-term relationships by encouraging all forms of engagement with the rising generation of Russians, modeling the effort on the people-to-people efforts of decades past. (Page 25-27)

*23 – Formally designate an office within the State Department to reach out to Track 2 participants and ensure the results of their discussions are captured and disseminated within the U.S. government. (Page 28)*

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## APPENDIX B - Details on Expanded Engagement

When it is once again appropriate to seek expanded cooperation and engagement with the Russian Federation, we believe the following broad areas should be considered (as noted in the main text, our specific examples are illustrative and incomplete):

- ***Expanded space cooperation.*** Since much of NASA’s mission involves the expansion of science and technology for non-military purposes, cooperation with other advanced space-faring nations (including Russia) is in the U.S. national interest. The most important U.S. – Russia space cooperation, joint efforts associated with the International Space Station, has continued throughout the crisis in Ukraine, although all other cooperation has been curtailed. When more normal engagement resumes, the first priority should be to reverse an apparent Russian decision not to continue that cooperation beyond 2020, as the United States has proposed. Other issues to be pursued bilaterally include gaining support for some form of Code of Conduct in space and finding a mechanism (which would ultimately need to involve China) for restricting dangerous space debris from ASAT tests.<sup>26</sup>
- ***Cooperation in the Arctic.*** The Arctic Council, which is the principal venue for Arctic cooperation, excludes military security issues. As the two most militarily-significant Arctic states, Russia and the United States could begin discussion of security issues, especially on shared maritime domain awareness, and in the maritime transportation area, including ensuring that Russian management of the Northern Sea route conforms to the Law of the Sea. Currently there are no security disputes between the United States and the Russian Federation in the Arctic, making engagement in this area easier (most U.S. objectives in the Arctic relate to reducing the risk of accidents and protecting the environment).

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<sup>26</sup> See “Ensuring the Long-Term Sustainability and Security of the Space Environment,” remarks by Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Frank A. Rose, U.S. Strategic Command Deterrence Symposium, August 13, 2014.

- ***Expanded cooperation in science.*** Although cooperation among scientists proved valuable during the Cold War, scientists in Russia today appear to have less influence.<sup>27</sup> Further, even before the Ukrainian crisis Russia was curtailing some cooperation (for example, through the International Science and Technology Centers historically funded through cooperative threat reduction programs). Despite these facts, government-to-government scientific cooperation, perhaps initially focusing on basic research, is an attractive area once broad engagement is resumed. An extensive “Agreement on Cooperation in Nuclear- and Energy-related Scientific Research and Development” was signed between the Department of Energy and Rosatom (the Russian nuclear counterpart) in September 2013. Cooperation has not yet been implemented but the agreement provides for cooperation in a broad range of topics from civil nuclear research to defense against asteroids and would serve as a suitable agenda once expanded engagement is appropriate. Another useful area would be diagnosing and containing viral pandemics. Cooperation could take the form of an expanded version of the current collaboration between the United States and Morocco in seeking to detect and contain these viral pandemics.
- ***Enhanced commercial cooperation.*** Trade between the United States and Russia accounts for only a tiny fraction (just over one percent) of total U.S. trade. Expanding commercial ties could have modest economic benefits but may be more important strategically; the more areas of cooperation between the two countries, the stronger overall strategic stability will become. Specific steps that could be taken at the governmental level include terminating application of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment and extending Permanent Normal Trade Relations to Russia, Russian ratification of the long-stalled 1992 Bilateral Investment Treaty, and aggressive use of the 2012 visa simplification procedures agreed between the two states.

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<sup>27</sup> The recent reorganization of the Russian Academy of Sciences illustrates this fact.

- ***Cooperation on climate change.*** The current Russian elite are uninterested in climate change. Russia is therefore unlikely to take a leadership role in UN Framework Convention on Climate Change negotiations.<sup>28</sup> Russia has the fourth largest emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> from fossil fuels, the world's largest forest resources, the largest natural gas reserves, and one of the least efficient energy production and consumption systems. Russia can make a substantial contribution to address climate change but faces technological shortcomings and political obstacles stemming from the country's continued economic dependence on hydrocarbon exports. Bilateral engagement might help influence Russian attitudes. Logical areas include (1) clean energy, including energy efficiency and reducing emissions from exploitation of fossil fuels, (2) sustainable management of forests and affected ecosystems, and (3) policy coordination and science cooperation.
- ***Joint research to develop U.S.-Russian verification technologies to support arms control and nonproliferation.*** Unofficial discussions with Russian experts cite problems with giving U.S. inspectors access to Russian nuclear facilities as an insurmountable barrier to non-strategic nuclear arms reduction negotiations. Similar Russian concerns led to the retention of a bomber counting rule in New START as an alternative to magazine access. Technology, perhaps building on the successful late 1990s Warhead Safety and Security Exchange (WSSX) program might alleviate these problems. Such technology is far more likely to be acceptable if it is jointly developed. Joint efforts might also provide improved technology for monitoring future non-proliferation regimes.
- ***Altered and expanded nuclear security cooperation.*** Russia plans to curtail cooperation on nuclear security projects being performed in Russia under the Cooperative Threat Reduction program and envisions

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<sup>28</sup> Russia has become increasingly engaged in international climate forums outside the UNFCCC, specifically the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) and the Arctic Council's Task Force on Black Carbon and Methane.

no new projects in 2015.<sup>29</sup> This does not preclude expanded cooperation outside Russia. Both the United States and Russia have an interest in ensuring the security of nuclear materials world-wide. The two states should jointly (perhaps with the IAEA) offer technical assistance to other states in implementing the requirements of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540, a 2004 resolution imposing binding obligations on all States to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. In support of this effort, the United States and Russia could assist states in establishing best security practices. As a separate matter, Russia and the United States could amplify the work of the Nuclear Security Summit by jointly establishing best practices for nuclear weapons (as opposed to nuclear material) security. This initiative would build on past discussions held by the National Nuclear Security Administration and could prove valuable in jointly urging other nuclear weapons-possessing states to adhere to similar stringent practices.<sup>30</sup>

- ***Expanded cooperation in counter-terrorism.*** The U.S. and Russian co-chairmanship of the 85-country Global Initiative to Counter Nuclear Terrorism is widely regarded as a successful model of engagement. In June 2013, the two Presidents issued a joint statement on expanding their cooperation, including such diverse areas as support for international organizations, countering terrorist use of the internet, providing security for major events, and protecting the tourist sector.<sup>31</sup> This statement could form the basis for expanded engagement.
- ***Revitalized cooperation under the NATO-Russia Founding Act.*** The 1997 “Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation” provides for a number of areas of cooperation between NATO and Russia, all now suspended. When appropriate, the United States could urge resumption and

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<sup>29</sup> Michael R. Gordon, “Russia to Curtail Nuclear Security Efforts With U.S.,” New York Times on line, November 13, 2014.

<sup>30</sup> This suggestion comes from former DOE and DOD official Dr. John Harvey.

<sup>31</sup> The White House, “Joint Statement of the Presidents of the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Cooperation in Countering Terrorism,” June 17, 2013.

revitalization of such cooperation. The overall purpose would be to strengthen NATO-Russian relations. In addition to arms control and military areas discussed elsewhere, this cooperation might include conflict prevention, nuclear safety, regional air traffic safety and airspace management, civil emergency preparedness and disaster relief (these final topics would be suitable for joint exercises).

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## Appendix C - Terms of Reference

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR  
ARMS CONTROL AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY  
WASHINGTON

September 17, 2013

### MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHAIRMAN, INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ADVISORY BOARD (ISAB)

SUBJECT: Terms of Reference – ISAB Study on U.S.-Russia Relations

The International Security Advisory Board (ISAB) is requested to undertake a high-level review of current and future U.S.-Russia relations, especially with a view toward identifying opportunities to improve strategic stability and U.S. national security.

The United States continues to seek out areas of common interest with Russia, in order to identify specific areas for cooperation that will advance U.S. interests. The U.S.-Russia agenda encompasses the strategically important issues of arms control, nonproliferation, international security, increased trade and investment, responding to global threats and challenges, countering terrorism and militant extremism, and enhanced ties between our societies and people. However, progress in advancing U.S.-Russia cooperation has been affected by a variety of factors. A high-level project concerning U.S.-Russia relations that takes a fresh look at the strategic relationship, and engages Russian counterparts, would help the United States identify challenges as well as potential solutions to bridge our differences and assist with formulating new approaches for moving the relationship forward.

It would be of great assistance if the ISAB could examine and assess as an introductory matter:

- the relative importance of the U.S.-Russia strategic relationship for the United States;
- common U.S.-Russia security interests and areas where interests differ;
- how current Russian domestic politics affect U.S. interests in national security areas;
- the current and future importance of continued cooperation on reducing and controlling weapons of mass destruction, including so called “threat

reduction” or “Nunn-Lugar” activities as well as activities that involve third countries and multilateral regimes;

- the significance in the relationship of other strategic stability matters such as missile defense, conventional long-range precision strike systems, space-based military systems, European security architecture, and other such issues; and
- The potential for joint research, including advanced scientific research, to develop mutually beneficial U.S.-Russian cooperation in the strategic stability and security arena, such as advanced verification technologies to support arms reduction negotiations and associated transparency measures.

Materials produced in this introductory examination and assessment of the issues could then be used, following review by the Department and interagency, for “Track 1.5”-type discussions with Russian counterparts. The goal of such discussions would be to develop and enrich the environment for bilateral Track 1 (government-to-government) talks in the strategic stability and security arena, including potentially formal negotiations of further arms reduction and control measures.

During its conduct of the study, the ISAB, as it deems necessary, may expand on the tasks listed above. I request that you complete the study in 270 days. Completed work should be submitted to the ISAB Executive Directorate no later than June 2014.

The Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security will sponsor the study. The Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control, Verification and Compliance will support the study. Michael Warder will serve as the Executive Secretary for the study and Chris Herrick will represent the ISAB Executive Directorate.

The study will be conducted in accordance with the provisions of P.L. 92-463, the “Federal Advisory Committee Act.” If the ISAB establishes a working group to assist in its study, the working group must present its report of findings to the full ISAB for consideration in a formal meeting, prior to presenting the report or findings to the Department.

  
Rose E. Gottemoeller  
Acting



## **Appendix D – Members and Project Staff**

### **Board Members**

Hon. Gary Hart (Chairman)

Hon. Charles B. Curtis (Vice Chairman)

Dr. Graham Allison

Dr. Michael R. Anastasio

Hon. Doug Bereuter

Dr. Bruce G. Blair

Amb. Linton F. Brooks

BGen Stephen A. Cheney (USMC, Ret.)

Mr. Joseph Cirincione

Amb. Robert Gallucci

Hon. Sherri Goodman

Amb. Robert E. Hunter

Dr. Shirley Ann Jackson

Dr. Raymond Jeanloz

Dr. David A. Kay

Gen Lester L. Lyles (USAF, Ret.)

GEN Montgomery C. Meigs (USA, Ret.)

Rep. Harold Naughton Jr.

Hon. William Perry

Mr. Robert N. Rose

Dr. Amy Sands

Lt Gen Brent Scowcroft (USAF, Ret.)

Hon. Walter Slocombe

Dr. James Tegnalia

Mr. William H. Tobey

Dr. Joan B. Woodard

### **Study Group Members**

Amb. Linton F. Brooks (Chairman)

Dr. Michael R. Anastasio

Dr. Bruce G. Blair

Mr. Joseph Cirincione

Hon. Charles B. Curtis

Amb. Robert Gallucci

Hon. Gary Hart

Hon. Walter Slocombe

Dr. James Tegnalia

### **Project Staff**

Mr. Richard W. Hartman II  
Executive Director, ISAB

Mr. Jamie F. Mannina  
Executive Secretary

Mr. Christopher Herrick  
Deputy Executive Director,  
ISAB

Ms. Thelma Jenkins-Anthony  
ISAB Action Officer

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## **Appendix E - Individuals Consulted by the Study Group**

### **Persons Consulted in Study Group Meetings**

**December 4, 2013**

Amb. John Beyrle	Director, U.S.-Russia Foundation Eurasia Foundation Former U.S. Ambassador to Russia from 2008 to 2012
Amb. James F. Collins	Senior Associate Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Former U.S. Ambassador to Russia from 1997 to 2001
Dr. Joshua Handler	Analyst, Office of Strategic, Proliferation and Military Issues, Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR/SPM), U.S. Department of State
Ms. Julia Gourley	Senior Arctic Advisor Office of Oceans and Polar Affairs Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs U.S. Department of State
Dr. Micah D. Lowenthal	Director, Committee on International Security and Arms Control The National Academy of Sciences
Amb. Bonnie D. Jenkins	Coordinator for Threat Reduction Programs Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation U.S. Department of State
Mr. Paul W. Jones	Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs U.S. Department of State
Mr. Frank Rose	Deputy Assistant Secretary for Space and Defense Policy Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance U.S. Department of State
Dr. Celeste A. Wallander	Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director, Russia and Central Asia National Security Council Staff The White House

## **January 31, 2014**

Mr. Jeff Baker	Director of the Europe Office International Affairs U.S. Department of Treasury
Dr. Patricia Falcone	Associate Director for National Security and International Affairs Office of Science and Technology Policy The White House
Mr. Matt Edwards	Director, Office of Russia, Ukraine & Eurasia Global Markets Unit International Trade Administration U.S. Department of Commerce
Ms. Betsy Hafner	Deputy Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Russia and Eurasia Office of the U.S. Trade Representative
Dr. Scott Pace	Director of the Space Policy Institute and Professor of the Practice of International Affairs Elliott School of International Affairs The George Washington University
Mr. Dimitri Simes	President and CEO of the Center for the National Interest and Publisher of its foreign policy bi- monthly magazine, <i>The National Interest</i>
Assigned Briefers	Central Intelligence Agency
Assigned Briefer	Office of Strategic, Proliferation and Military Issues, Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR/SPM), U.S. Department of State

## **April 1, 2014**

Assigned Briefers	Central Intelligence Agency
Assigned Briefer	Office of Strategic, Proliferation and Military Issues, Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR/SPM), U.S. Department of State

## **May 12, 2014**

Dr. Cynthia Doell

Senior Political Officer  
Office of Russia Affairs  
U.S. Department of State

Mr. Brian Greaney

Acting Office Director  
Office of Russia Affairs  
U.S. Department of State

Assigned Briefers

Central Intelligence Agency

Assigned Briefer

Office of Strategic, Proliferation and Military Issues,  
Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR/SPM),  
U.S. Department of State

## **September 8, 2014**

Dr. Nancy B. Jackson

Science Advisor  
Office of the Science and Technology Advisor to the  
Secretary  
International Security and Nonproliferation  
U.S. Department of State

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